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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2157

INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE

RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE

RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE

RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE

RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001574

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/C AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/23/2018

TAGS: ASEC PGOV PREL KPKO UN AU SU

SUBJECT: PROUD CHADIAN REBEL CHIEF BOASTS OF INFLUENCE AND
MOVEMENT TOWARDS UNIFICATION

REF: KHARTOUM 1558

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)
)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On October 23, the leader of UFCD Adouma Hassaballah Djadalrab, told poloffs that the leadership of five Chadian rebel movements are currently in Khartoum working towards unification and the selection of a single leader. Hassaballah denied Khartoum's involvement in this meeting, proudly stating that he was spearheading this effort on his own. Like other rebel contacts, Hassaballah called for the U.S. to play a more active role in negotiations between the GoC and the Chadian rebel movements. END SUMMARY.

"UFCD COULD OVERTHROW GOC ON ITS OWN, BUT WE NEED TO UNITE"

¶2. (C) Hassaballah opened the meeting stating that his group, the Union des Forces pour le Changement et la Democratie (UFCD,) is the strongest opposition movement in Chad with over 10,000 fighters. (Hasballah later gave his assessment of other movements, placing UFDD/F's Aboud with 2,000 fighters, UFDD's Nouri with 400, RFC's Erdimi with 120, and FSR's Soubiane with a marginal number.) UFCD could successfully overthrow the Chadian government without the support of other rebel movements, stated Hassaballah, but this could create a chaotic and divided state similar to Somalia. An inclusive dialogue of armed movements, civil society groups, and political parties will lead towards consensus and a unified opposition movement, stated Hassaballah. Hassaballah boasted that he has a good personal relationship with other rebel leaders ("like Aboud, Nouri, and Erdimi,") but their different political ideas and programs has kept the opposition divided.

"THE WEST SHOULD TAKE THE BULL BY ITS TWO HORNS"

¶3. (C) According to Hassaballah, the West has become obsessed by Darfur and completely neglected Chad. Instead, the West should give each of these issues equal weight and "hold this bull by both its horns, otherwise the problems will continue on both sides of the border," said Hassaballah. Replacing President Deby will not only solve Chad's political and social problems, but it will also bring peace to Darfur, emphasized Hassaballah. As an example of how the problems of Darfur and Chad are intertwined, Hasaballah claimed that Abdul Wahid Al-Nur started the Sudan Liberation Movement in Chadian rebel camps.

CALL FOR A CREDIBLE MEDIATOR

¶4. (C) Like other Chadian rebel leaders, Hassaballah

stressed that negotiations with the GoC require a credible mediator like the U.S. Hassaballah stated that with American oil companies operating in Chad, the U.S. has long-term economic interests in the region and that it should support reconciliation between the rebels and GoC. Hassaballah then criticized the French colonial presence, as "France is all about exploitation, while the U.S. has sincere interest in the well-being of Chad." Despite his praise for the U.S., he then added, "The U.S. just doesn't understand Africa or Chad - it is not enough to meet in a cafe and take notes, you need to see what is happening to the people." Hasballah then accused the U.S. of funding Darfuri rebel movements such as SLA/Abdul Wahid, a comment strongly refuted by polchief. Hasballah then emphasized that without a credible mediator, the rebels will never take Deby seriously because, "even after signing deals with rebel leaders, he has killed more than twenty of them and we will never trust him by himself."

BIG GRIEVANCES, BIG PROMISES

15. (C) After taking control of Chad, the rebel movements will retain power only for a short transition period. Transparent elections with international observers will then be held and Chad will finally become a democratic country. Deby will then be brought to justice for "the 500,000 people that he has killed during his eighteen years in power," emphasized Hassaballah.

IMMEDIATE PLANS

16. (C) Hasballah stated that he will remain in Khartoum for more than two weeks. He will then return to the field in

KHARTOUM 00001574 002 OF 002

Eastern Chad, where he hopes that the Chadian rebels would elect a leader. When asked who would participate in such an election Hasballah replied that it is not clear whether only the rebel leadership will select a leader or whether all of the rebels' fighters would participate. When asked where he will be in six months, Hasballah confidently responded, "We will definitely be united by that point and we will either be negotiating or fighting with the GoC."

COMMENT

17. (C) Compared to other Chadian rebels, Hassaballah was often difficult to follow. He wandered from topic to topic, occasionally contradicted himself, and did not present his arguments in a logical or altogether convincing fashion. Hassaballah's severely scarred hand and constantly trembling head may also indicate that he is not in the best of health, or even that he may be in the early stages of Parkinson's disease. Nonetheless, Hasballah clearly sees himself as a big player with an even bigger grievance against the GoC. This cocktail of arrogance, perceived injustice, and the largest rebel force is a dangerous combination and we will closely watch Hasballah in the coming weeks. The very idea of such a personality ever ruling Chad is a chilling prospect.

FERNANDEZ